DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 325 961 EA 022 454

AUTHOR Rothberg, Robert A.; Bozeman, William C.
TITLE Restructuring: A School-Based Plan of Action.
PUB DATE Nov 90
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Regional Council for Educational Administration (Atlanta, GA, November 11-13, 1990). Faint and broken print in the attached critique form may not reproduce adequately in paper copy.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Collegiality; Committees; *Cooperative Planning; Decentralization; Elementary Secondary Education; Institutional Mission; Organizational Climate; *Organizational Development; Organizational Objectives; *Participative Decision Making; *School Based Management; School Restructuring; *Teamwork

ABSTRACT

The processes by which school leaders can institutionalize staff and organizational development, with a focus on initiating school restructuring through team development, are described. Three features are necessary for implementing school restructuring through team development: a deliberate plan for staff involvement, a positive work environment, and collegiality. Nine factors of team development are briefly described and a plan of action is presented. A conclusion is that collaboration between faculty and staff to implement a governance system and organizational/staff development programs will most likely result in increased individual ownership and focus on long-term goals. A school effectiveness critique is included. (4 references) (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED325961

SRCEA Paper Presentation

Restructuring: A School-Based Plan of Action

Robert A. Rothberg
William C. Bozeman
University of Central Florida
College of Education

November 1990

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Rothberg

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EA 022 454

Introduction

The meaningful involvement of faculty and staff in the governance of educational institutions appears to be the emerging theme of the 1990s. For the past 10-15 years, this concern in education follows movements in business and industry toward employee involvement through shared-decision making. Indeed, current literature related to successful organizations and effective leadership suggests that continuing change and improvements in any organization are unlikely to occur unless employees are involved in both day-to-day planning as well as strategic planning. Furthermore, organizational and staff development are among the most effective means of enhancing faculty competence. This emerging theme should be viewed by educational leaders as both a challenge and an opportunity.

The purpose of this paper presentation is to address how school leaders may go about the process of institutionalizing staff and organizational development. Three belief statements, which the authors consider axiomatic, guide this process:

1. Institutionalization of any set of activities cannot occur in the absence of a deliberate plan of faculty and staff involvement (i.e., the restructure of school governance policies). Working together will, in most cases, provide a more positive work environment and climate.
2. A positive work environment is a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition for effective schools. Stated another way, an open, healthy climate supported by trust

and collegiality may not, in itself, result in effectiveness gains; however, sustained gains will not likely occur in the absence of such a climate.

3. Such an environment may well be the best of all possible work incentives for educators. Involvement in the processes described herein will offer valuable intrinsic incentives and motivators.

The success of any plan, including one leading to the restructure of school governance, does not necessarily depend on its merit alone. Success is more likely a function of the right combination of leadership skills and a strategy for involving clients in the development of the governance system. Again, this positive climate of involvement is a critical element in any effort toward school improvement.

The Restructured School

Restructuring is defined as the involvement of as many individuals as possible in decision making, thereby creating a more open community of planners and problem solvers. Specific recommendations and actions toward restructure include: goal determination, establishment and communication of a shared vision, organization of task forces, empowerment of stakeholders, use of an external facilitator, the gathering and analysis of data (as required), documentation of activities and on-going evaluation.

Restructured schools of the 1990s view individual schools as the important elemen. to change and reform. The former emphasis

on specialization and efficiency is giving way to diverse localized solutions, thereby giving teachers responsibility for more than just teaching. This locus of control results in a more decentralized authority and decision-making structure. The restructured school produces new staff roles and encourages cooperation in order to achieve greater student achievement which, in turn, creates increased job satisfaction.

The restructured school utilizes teams of parents, students, teachers, and administrators in making decisions. It has two-way communication; a great deal of collaboration; leaders who nurture leadership abilities in others; peer assistance and coaching; and diverse leadership roles (National Association Secondary School. Principals, 1990). Concerns in the restructured school involve group process in the identification of problems and goals; team building and trust development; interpersonal skill development; consensus seeking and conflict resolution.

Factors in Team Development in Initiating Restructure

The following factors are important in the process of working together for increased achievement (Alexander, 1985) and need to be assessed at the outset of any restructuring effort:

1. Shared Goals and Objectives. In order for a team to operate effectively, it must have stated goals and objectives. These goals are not a simple understanding of the immediate task, but an overall understanding of the group's role in the total organization, its responsibilities and the things the team wants to

accomplish. In addition, team members must be committed to the goals. Such commitment accrues through the involvement of all team members in defining goals and relating goals to specific problems that are relevant to team members.

2. Utilization of Resources. The ultimate purpose of a team is to work effectively. In order to accomplish this feat, the team must effectively use all resources at its disposal. This means establishing an environment that allows individual resources to be used. Team effectiveness is enhanced when every member has the opportunity to contribute and all opinions are heard and considered.

3. Trust and Conflict Resolution. In any team situation, disagreement is likely to occur. The ability to openly recognize conflict and seek to resolve it through discussion is critical to a team's success. Behaviors such as accepting others, involving others, openness, awareness and honesty are important behaviors in building trust.

4. Shared Leadership. Individuals will not function as a team if they are brought together simply to "rubber stamp" decisions made by their leader or others not in the group. The development and cohesion of a team occurs only when there is a feeling of shared leadership among all team members.

5. Control and Procedures. A group needs to establish procedures in order to guide or regulate its activities. For example, a meeting agenda serves to guide group activities during a meeting. Schedules of when specific actions will be taken also regulate team activities. Team development and team-member commitment is facilitated through maximum involvement in the establishment of agendas, schedules and other procedures.
6. Effective Interpersonal Communications. Effective team development depends on the ability of team members to communicate with one another in an open and honest manner. It involves listening, dealing with emotions, expressing one's ideas and thoughts clearly, the willingness to appropriately self-disclose and an adequate self-concept.
7. Approach to Problem-Solving and Decision-Making. Solving problems and making decisions are two critical team functions. A generally accepted, step-by-step procedure for problem-solving and decision-making is as follows:
   a. Identify the problem;
   b. Develop criteria;
   c. Gather relevant data;
   d. Identify all feasible, alternative solutions or courses of action;
   e. Evaluate the alternatives;
   f. Reach a decision;

g. Implement the decision.

8. Experimentation/Creativity. Just as it is important for a team to have certain structured procedures, it is also important that the team be prepared on occasion, to move beyond the boundaries of established procedures and processes in order to experiment with new ways of doing things.

9. Evaluation. Periodically, the team should examine its group processes from both task and maintenance aspects. This examination or "critique" requires the team to stop and examine how well it is doing and what, if anything, may be hindering its operation.

A Plan of Action

The "School Effectiveness Critique" which uses factors in team development is an instrument that can be used in schools to collect initial data. Having a staff respond to items and three-open ended statements provides information necessary to begin. Data, after compilation, are shared with the group. It is important that averages for each item not be used. Averaging merely pushes everything to the middle. Numbers and percentages for the scale should be discussed with strengths and weaknesses noted. Open ended statements can also be compiled.

A factor that often emerges from the critique instrument is the confusion on an agreed-upon mission statement. If this is the case, the next step might be a goal setting activity which accomplishes the following:

1. Obtains individual "mission" statements from staff members.
2. Develops consensus for a single mission statement for the organization.
3. Answers the questions, "What would the ideal organization look like to carry out this mission? What characteristics?
4. Decides on what critical issues are to be faced in carrying out the mission? That is, what will help or hinder movement to the vision?

Once the organization's mission/goals are understood by the staff and community, the next area to focus upon would be "Enhancing Effectiveness" - How to organize the faculty in teams to solve problems. Two assumptions are present: (1) The school is the basic unit for effective change; (2) the school is presently effective, but would like to be even better.

The general objective is to systematically address and solve staff concerns of school problems. Specific objectives are that the participants will:

1. Identify their general perceptions of school effectiveness.
2. Identify specific concerns of school problems.
3. Form work groups to analyze the situation and develop strategies for improvement.
4. Share plans of action for school improvement.

Use of the "School Effectiveness Critique" helps the group focus on what is good, and not so good, in the organization. After reviewing results of the instrument and time spent on goal setting, the group should be ready to move on.

As individuals within the group, what are your major concerns and/or problems with the organization? What bugs you? After doing this as individuals, it should be processed in groups of three and six looking for consensus and using the following criteria:

Time--Do you have enough time to solve the problem?

Economics--Will it cost too much?

Resources--Do you have or can you get what you need?

Risk--Is it too dangerous?

Organizational constraints--"Downtown" won't let you.

Worthwhileness--Its something of value.

When the groups of six report their concerns (using newsprint placed on the wall is a good way) to the total group, four to six major issues often emerge. Faculty morale, discipline and math scores are typical concerns that surface.

After development of these concerns, task forces or committees are formed to address problems. It is important to begin with volunteers although it is helpful if everyone would join a group of his/her choice.

Committees need a focus to work on issues. One structure which has been found to be effective is as follows:

1. Situation. The way you perceive a situation for which you are designing/planning. The what is.
2. Assumptions. Your beliefs about yourself and your target group. The what should be.
3. Goal(s). What you intend, hope to accomplish; outcomes.
4. Strategies. What are the major things you want to do? What are the parts of the overall plan? Who will do what and when?

When do team members get together to problem solve? It certainly varies with different groups but effective principals seem to be able to determine ways to accomplish this during the school day. One elementary school principal was able to have groups meet for one and a half hours during the day by using volunteers and working around art, music and physical education; another used substitutes. The point is, it can be done if it is a priority item.

At the end of the process (although maybe the process should never end), the entire group should meet to report results of their efforts. One spinoff from a high school group concerned with faculty morale was the acquisition of an old portable classroom that was reconditioned and made into a lovely faculty dining room. At an elementary school charged with parental involvement, the school won a state award at the end of the year recognizing the wonderful involvement they had achieved.

The process of faculty and staff working together as a team toward the development of governance system and resultant organizational and staff development programs is likely to accomplish two ends. First, and perhaps most important, individuals will have ownership of the system. They will be more supportive of the structure and less apt to subvert or sabotage school efforts. Secondly, because the focus of the initial phases is toward purpose, the faculty and staff are less likely to delve into existing problems, politics, and "patch-work" solutions.

Every organization has concerns which need to be addressed. It should not be a principal's problem alone, and we know too much to allow this to occur. "Teamwork" is the cliche used to discuss winning in athletics. That same concept can be transferred to the school house for increasing student achievement and improving the quality of life for all involved.

REFERENCES

Alexander, M. (1985). The team effectiveness critique. University Associates 1985 annual: Developing human resources, pp. 101-104.

Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H. (1982). In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best-run companies. New York: Harper & Row.

National Association of Secondary School Principals. (1990). Restructuring. Washington, DC: Author.

Rothberg, R. A. (1984). Trust development: The forgotten leadership skill. NASSP Bulletin, 68(476), 18-22.

THE SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS CRITIQUE

Instructions: Indicate on the scales that follow your assessment of your school and the way it functions by circling the number on each scale that you feel is most descriptive of your school.

1. Goals and Objectives

There is a lack of commonly understood goals and objectives. — School members understand and agree on goals and objectives.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Utilization of Resources

All member resources are not recognized and/or utilized. — Member resources are fully recognized and utilized.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. Trust and Conflict

There is little trust among members, and conflict is evident. — There is a high degree of trust among members, and conflict is dealt with openly and worked through.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. Leadership

One person dominates, and leadership roles are not carried out or shared. — There is full participation in leadership; leadership roles are shared by members.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. Control and Procedures

There is little control, and there is a lack of procedures to guide school functioning. — There are effective procedures to guide school functioning; school members support these procedures and regulate themselves.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. *Interpersonal Communications*

Communications between members are closed and guarded. — *Communications between members are open and participative.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. *Problem Solving/Decision Making*

The school has no agreed-on approaches to problem solving and decision making. — *The school has well-established and agreed-on approaches to problem solving and decision making.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. *Experimentation/Creativity*

The school is rigid and does not experiment with how things are done. — *The school experiments with different ways of doing things and is creative in its approach.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. *Evaluation*

The group never evaluates its functioning or process. — *The group often evaluates its functioning and process.*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Adapted from "The Team Effectiveness Critique" by Mark Alexander, University Associates, 1985 Annual: Developing Human Resources, pp. 105-106.

Things I like best in our school...

Things I like least in our school...

What is the mission/goal of this school?